

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 5012

FROM ROCAP DIRECTOR

E.O.11652: GDS
SUBJ: AGRICULTURAL TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM (ATPP)

REF: GUATEMALA 3852 (UNCL)

1. SEICA SECRETARY GENERAL MAYORGA ADVISED ME AUGUST 5 THAT PLANNED AUGUST MEETING OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMY TO DISCUSS AGRICULTURAL TRADE EXPANSION WAS BEING POSTPONED UNTIL OCTOBER. NEW COSTA RICAN MINISTER OF ECONOMY REQUESTED DELAY BECUASE OF PRESS OF OTHER BUSINESS. INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES (IICA) WILL BE SPONSORING A MEETING OF AGRICULTURE MINISTERS FROM THE ENTIRE HEMISPHERE IN TEGUCIGALPA SEPTEMBER 6-8. HOWEVER, SCHEDULE FOR THE MEETING IS FULL, AND PARTICULARLY SINCE MINISTERS OF ECONOMY WILL NOT BE PRESENT. MAYORGA INTENDS TO DO NO MORE THAN DISCUSS SCHEDULING AND AGENDA FOR THE OCTOBER MEETING.

2. WHILE HE REGRETS THE DELAY. MAYORGA CONTINUES TO FEEL THAT THE TRADE PROMOTION INITIATIVE HAS A CHANCE.
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HE MENTIONED A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE COSTA RICAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AS AN ENCOURAGING FACTOR. HE ALSO MENTIONED THE JUNE MEETING OF THE GRAIN STABILIZATION INSTITUTIONS AS EVIDENCE OF INTEREST, ALTHOUGH IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE WAS UNHAPPY THAT SEICA HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE POINTED OUT THAT

THE PROXIMITY OF GUATEMALAN AND COSTA RICAN ELECTIONS
MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN MEANINGFUL COMMITMENTS
FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

3. THE SLIPPAGE OF THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS SHOULD
NOT, IN MY VIEW, CAUSE US TO SLIP THE MDCC SCHEDULED,
AS I UNDERSTAND IT, FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER. AT WHICH
EOCAP'S FUTURE WILL BE DISCUSSED. WE WILL COMPLETE
WORK ON THE PHASE-OUT PLAN AND DISTRIBUTE IT TO CENTRAL
AMERICAN MISSIONS AND WASHINGTON BY THE END OF
AUGUST. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, IT IS DIFFICULT TO
SEE HOW WE CAN SATISFY OURSELVES OF THE GENUINENESS
OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO THE ATPP BY
WHAT HAPPENS AT THE OCTOBER MEETING OF MINISTERS
(WHICH COULD EASILY SLIP AGAIN). WE WILL WANT TO TEST
ANY COMMITMENTS THAT MIGHT COME OUT OF THAT MEETING
WITH THE CHIEFS OF STATE, AND GIVEN THE LESS THAN
ALACRITOUS RESPONSE OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS
THUS FAR, MY CURRENT VIEW IS THAT, IN ADDITION TO A
FORMAL AGREEMENT AND ASSURANCES, WE SHOULD SEE SOME
CONCRETE STEPS BEFORE SENDING THE ATPP TO WASHINGTON.
CHANCES ARE THAT WE WILL RECOMMEND THAT THE PHASE-
OUT PLAN BE EXECUTED BUT THAT WE BE PREPARED TO SUSPEND
IT AT SUCH TIME AS WE ARE SATISFIED WITH CENTRAL AMERICAN
WILL WITH RESPECT TO THE ATPP.

4. HARRY ACKERMAN AND I WILL BE VISITING COSTA RICA,
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HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA THE WEEK OF AUGUST 15, AMONG
OTHER THINGS TO DISCUSS STATUS OF THE ATPP WITH GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS. WE PLAN TO HOLD SIMILAR CONVERSATIONS WITH
GUATEMALAN OFFICIALS THE FOLLOWING WEEK. (GIVEN THE
NEWNESS OF THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT, AND THE
LIMITED TIME AVAILABLE TO ME SINCE I PLAN TO LEAVE
POST SEPTEMBER 5, THE SALVADORAN VISIT WILL PROBABLY
OCCUR LATER IN SEPTEMBER.) IT IS POSSIBLE THAT, DURING
THIS ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS, FACTORS WILL BECOME
APPARENT WHICH WOULD WARRANT RE-CONSIDERATION OF THE
TIMING OF THE MDCC, BUT I CONSIDER THAT UNLIKELY.
IN ANY EVENT, THE PHASE-OUT PLAN WILL TREAT IN DEPTH
THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE ATPP TO A PHASE OUT DECISION.
A CABLE SUMMARY WILL BE TRANSMITTED SIMULTANEOUSLY
WITH THE POUCHING OF THE PLAN. HARRISON.
BOSTER

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NNN

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